

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To establish the Council on Improving Federal Civic Architecture, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. RUBIO introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To establish the Council on Improving Federal Civic Architecture, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Beautifying Federal
5 Civic Architecture Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES.**

7 It is the policy of the United States that—

8 (1) applicable Federal public buildings should—

9 (A) uplift and beautify public spaces;

10 (B) inspire the human spirit;

1 (C) ennoble the United States;

2 (D) command respect from the general
3 public;

4 (E) be visually identifiable as civic build-
5 ings; and

6 (F) as appropriate, respect regional archi-
7 tectural heritage;

8 (2) architecture, with particular regard for tra-
9 ditional and classical architecture, that meets the
10 criteria described in paragraph (1) is the preferred
11 architecture for applicable Federal public buildings;

12 (3) in the District of Columbia, classical archi-
13 tecture is the preferred and default architecture for
14 Federal public buildings absent exceptional factors
15 necessitating another style of architecture;

16 (4) where the architecture of applicable Federal
17 public buildings diverges from the preferred architec-
18 ture, great care and consideration shall be taken to
19 choose a design that—

20 (A) commands respect from the general
21 public; and

22 (B) clearly conveys to the general public
23 the dignity, enterprise, vigor, and stability of
24 the system of self-government of the United
25 States;

1 (5) when renovating, reducing, or expanding ap-
2 plicable Federal public buildings that do not meet
3 the criteria described in paragraphs (1), (2), or (3),
4 the feasibility and potential expense of building rede-
5 sign to meet those criteria should be examined;

6 (6) where feasible and economical, a redesign
7 described in paragraph (5) should be given substan-
8 tial consideration, especially with respect to the exte-
9 rior of the applicable Federal building; and

10 (7)(A) the Administration should seek input
11 from future users of applicable Federal public build-
12 ings and the general public in the community where
13 those buildings will be located; and

14 (B) give the input received from the general
15 public under subparagraph (A) substantial consider-
16 ation before selecting an architectural firm or design
17 style for those buildings.

18 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

19 In this Act:

20 (1) 2023 DOLLARS.—The term “2023 dollars”
21 means dollars adjusted for inflating using the Gross
22 Domestic Product price deflator of the Bureau of
23 Economic Analysis, with 2023 as the base year.

24 (2) ADMINISTRATION.—The term “Administra-
25 tion” means the General Services Administration.

1 (3) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-
2 trator” means the Administrator of General Serv-
3 ices.

4 (4) APPLICABLE FEDERAL PUBLIC BUILDING.—

5 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “applicable
6 Federal public building” means—

7 (i) any Federal courthouse;

8 (ii) any Federal agency headquarters;

9 (iii) any public building in the District
10 of Columbia; and

11 (iv) any other public building the cost
12 or expected cost to design, build, and finish
13 of which is more than \$50,000,000 in
14 2023 dollars.

15 (B) EXCLUSIONS.—The term “applicable
16 Federal public building” does not include an in-
17 frastructure project or land port of entry.

18 (5) BRUTALIST.—The term “Brutalist” means
19 the style of architecture that grew out of the early
20 20th-century modernist movement that is character-
21 ized by a massive and block-like appearance with a
22 rigid geometric style and large-scale use of exposed
23 poured concrete.

24 (6) CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “classical ar-
2 chitecture” means the architectural tradition—

3 (i) derived from the forms, principles,
4 and vocabulary of the architecture of
5 Greek and Roman antiquity; and

6 (ii) later developed and expanded on
7 by—

8 (I) Renaissance architects, in-
9 cluding Alberti, Brunelleschi, Michel-
10 angelo, and Palladio;

11 (II) Enlightenment masters, in-
12 cluding Robert Adam, John Soane,
13 and Christopher Wren;

14 (III) 19th Century architects, in-
15 cluding Benjamin Henry Latrobe,
16 Louise Blanchard Bethune, Robert
17 Mills, and Thomas U. Walter; and

18 (IV) 20th Century practitioners,
19 including Julian Abele, Daniel
20 Burnham, Charles F. McKim, John
21 Russell Pope, Julia Morgan, Robert
22 Robinson Taylor, and the firm of
23 Delano and Aldrich.

24 (B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “Classical ar-
25 chitecture” includes styles such as Neoclassical,

1 Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, Beaux-Arts,
2 and Art Deco.

3 (7) COUNCIL.—The term “Council” means the
4 Council on Improving Federal Civic Architecture es-
5 tablished by section 4(a).

6 (8) DECONSTRUCTIVIST.—The term
7 “Deconstructivist” means the style of architecture—

8 (A) generally known as
9 “deconstructivism”; and

10 (B) that subverts the traditional values of
11 architecture through features such as frag-
12 mentation, disorder, discontinuity, distortion,
13 skewed geometry, and the appearance of insta-
14 bility.

15 (9) GENERAL PUBLIC.—The term “general
16 public” means members of the public who are not—

17 (A) artists, architects, engineers, art or ar-
18 chitecture critics, instructors or professors of
19 art or architecture, or members of the building
20 industry; or

21 (B) affiliated with any interest group,
22 trade association, or any other organization
23 whose membership is financially affected by de-
24 cisions involving the design, construction, or re-
25 modeling of public buildings.

1 (10) OFFICER.—The term “officer” has the
2 meaning given the term in section 2104 of title 5,
3 United States Code.

4 (11) PREFERRED ARCHITECTURE.—The term
5 “preferred architecture” means the architecture de-
6 scribed in section 2(2).

7 (12) PUBLIC BUILDING.—The term “public
8 building” has the meaning given the term in section
9 3301(a) of title 40, United States Code.

10 (13) TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE.—The term
11 “traditional architecture” includes—

12 (A) classical architecture; and

13 (B) the historic humanistic architecture,
14 including Gothic, Italianate, Renaissance Re-
15 vival, Romanesque, Pueblo Revival, Spanish Co-
16 lonial, and other styles of architecture histori-
17 cally rooted in various regions of the United
18 States.

19 **SEC. 4. COUNCIL ON IMPROVING FEDERAL CIVIC ARCHI-**
20 **TECTURE.**

21 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established the
22 Council on Improving Federal Civic Architecture.

23 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Council shall be com-
25 posed of—

1 (A) the Chair of the Commission of Fine
2 Arts serving in that position on the date of en-
3 actment of this Act;

4 (B) any individual who served as Chair of
5 the Commission of Fine Arts before the date of
6 enactment of this Act, if that individual chooses
7 to serve on the Council;

8 (C) the Secretary of the Commission of
9 Fine Arts;

10 (D) the Architect of the Capitol (or a des-
11 ignee);

12 (E) the Commissioner of the Public Build-
13 ing Service of the Administration;

14 (F) the Chief Architect of the Administra-
15 tion; and

16 (G) not more than 10 individuals, to be
17 evenly appointed by the Chair of the Committee
18 on Environment and Public Works of the Sen-
19 ate and the Chair of the Committee on Trans-
20 portation and Infrastructure of the House of
21 Representatives, from among citizens of the
22 United States that are not employees or officers
23 of the Federal Government.

24 (2) CHAIR.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Council shall be
2 chaired by an individual described in any of
3 subparagraphs (A) through (G) of paragraph
4 (1), who shall be elected by the Council.

5 (B) VICE CHAIR; SUBCOMMITTEES.—The
6 Chair of the Council may—

7 (i) designate a Vice Chair; and

8 (ii) establish subcommittees.

9 (3) CERTAIN MEMBERS.—Members of the
10 Council described in paragraph (1)(G)—

11 (A) shall serve on the Council until the
12 date on which the Council terminates under
13 subsection (e); and

14 (B) shall not be removed except for ineffi-
15 ciency, neglect of duty, or malfeasance.

16 (4) COMPENSATION.—

17 (A) NO COMPENSATION.—Except as pro-
18 vided in subparagraph (B), a member of the
19 Council shall receive no compensation as a re-
20 sult of serving on the Council.

21 (B) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the
22 Council shall be allowed travel expenses, includ-
23 ing per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates au-
24 thorized for employees of agencies under sub-
25 chapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States

1 Code, while away from their homes or regular
2 places of business in the performance of serv-
3 ices for the Council.

4 (c) DUTIES OF COUNCIL.—The Council shall—

5 (1) not later than 1 year after the date of en-
6 actment of this Act, and annually thereafter until
7 the date on which the Council terminates under sub-
8 section (e), submit to the Administrator a report
9 recommending updates to policies, procedures, or
10 practices of the Administration that—

11 (A)(i) identifies any policies, procedures, or
12 practices of the Administration that do not ad-
13 here to sections 2 and 5; and

14 (ii) recommends updates to those policies,
15 procedures, and practices to align those policies,
16 procedures, and practices with those sections;

17 (B) analyzes the design for any new appli-
18 cable Federal public building and, if necessary,
19 recommends changes so that the applicable
20 Federal public building adheres to sections 2
21 and 5; and

22 (C) analyzes all applicable Federal public
23 buildings, including the architectural styles of
24 those buildings, and recommends redesigns, if
25 any, to align those buildings with section 2; and

1 (2) recommend to the Administrator changes to
2 Administration policies for situations in which the
3 Administration participates in a design selection
4 pursuant to chapter 89 of title 40, United States
5 Code (commonly known as the “Commemorative
6 Works Act”), in furtherance of the purposes of this
7 Act and consistent with applicable law.

8 (d) **APPLICABILITY.**—Chapter 10 of title 5, United
9 States Code (commonly known as the “Federal Advisory
10 Committee Act”), shall apply to the Council.

11 (e) **TERMINATION.**—The Council shall terminate on
12 the date that is 5 years after the date on which the Council
13 holds the initial meeting of the Council.

14 **SEC. 5. GSA REQUIREMENTS.**

15 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Administrator shall adhere to
16 the policy of the United States described in section 2.

17 (b) **NOTIFICATION.**—

18 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—If the Administrator pro-
19 poses to approve a design for a new applicable Fed-
20 eral public building that diverges from the preferred
21 architecture, including Brutalist or Deconstructivist
22 architecture or any design derived from or related to
23 those styles of architecture, the Administrator shall
24 submit to the Assistant to the President for Domes-
25 tic Policy and the appropriate committees of Con-

1 gress, not later than 30 days before the date on
2 which the Administrator could reject the design
3 without incurring substantial expenditures, a notifi-
4 cation in accordance with paragraph (2).

5 (2) REQUIREMENTS.—A notification submitted
6 under paragraph (1) shall describe the reasons the
7 Administrator proposes to approve a design de-
8 scribed in that paragraph, including—

9 (A) a detailed explanation of why the Ad-
10 ministrator believes selecting the design is justi-
11 fied, with particular focus on whether the de-
12 sign is as beautiful and reflective of the dignity,
13 enterprise, vigor, and stability of the system of
14 self-government in the United States as alter-
15 native designs of comparable cost using pre-
16 ferred architecture;

17 (B) the total expected cost of adopting the
18 proposed design, including estimated mainte-
19 nance and replacement costs throughout the ex-
20 pected lifecycle of the design;

21 (C)(i) a description of the designs using
22 preferred architecture seriously considered for
23 the project, including copies of blueprints or
24 renderings of those designs that have been pro-
25 duced; and

1 (ii) the total expected cost of adopting
2 those designs, including estimated maintenance
3 and replacement costs throughout the expected
4 lifecycles of those designs; and

5 (D) the steps that the Administrator took
6 to solicit and consider the views of the general
7 public about the design.

8 **SEC. 6. REPORTS TO CONGRESS.**

9 Not less frequently than once annually, the Adminis-
10 trator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Con-
11 gress a report that includes—

12 (1) a detailed explanation of the steps the Ad-
13 ministrator has taken to adhere to sections 2 and 5;

14 (2) a detailed explanation of the steps the Ad-
15 ministrator has taken to adopt recommendations
16 made by the Council in a report submitted under
17 section 4(c)(1); and

18 (3) a list of all applicable Federal public build-
19 ings that the Federal Government owns and a de-
20 scription of the architectural style of those buildings.